A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEEDE:

OR,

THE LEAST MEASVRE OF GRACE, that is or can be effectuall to ſaluation.

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To the Right Honorable and Vertuous *Lady*, *the Lady* MARGARET, Counteſſe of Cumberland, Grace and Peace.

Ight Honourable, the kingdome of heauen, of which the Scripture ſpeaketh ſo oft, is properly a certaine ſtate or condition, whereby we ſtand in the fauour and loue of God, in and by Chriſt. And this Kingdome is compared to a graine of Muſterd-ſeede, to teach vs that a man is euen at that inſtant already entred into the kingdome of heauen, when the Lord that good Husbandman hath caſt but ſome little portion of faith or repentance into the ground of the heart; yea, though it be but

as one Graine of Musterd-seede. Of this little Graine I haue penned this Treatise, in quantitie answerable thereto: and I now present the same to your Ladiship, not to supply your want, (for I hope you are stored with many Graines of this kinde) but to performe some dutie on my part. Hoping therefore that your Ladiship will reade and accept the same, I take my leaue, commending you to the blessing and protection of Almightie.

Your Honours

to command,

W. Perkins.

A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEEDE OR, THE LEAST measure of grace, that is, or can be effectuall to ſaluation.

IT is a very neceſſary point to bee knowne, *What is the leaſt meaſure of Grace that can befall the true childe of God, leſſer then which, there is no grace effectuall to ſaluation.* For firſt of all, the right vnderſtanding of this point, is the very foundation of a true comfort vnto all troubled and touched conſciences. Secondly, it is a notable meanes to

ſtirre vp thankefulneſſe in them that haue any grace at all; when they ſhall in examination of themſelues conſider, that they haue receiued of God the leaſt meaſure of grace or more. Thirdly, it will bee an inducement, and a ſpurre vnto many careleſſe and vnrepentant perſons, to embrace the Goſpel, and to beginne repentance for their ſinnes; when they ſhall perceiue, and that by the word of God, that God accepts the very ſeedes and rudiments of faith and repentance at the firſt, though they bee but in meaſure as a Graine of Muſterd-ſeede. Now then for opening and clearing of this point: I will ſet downe fiue ſeuerall concluſions, in ſuch

ſuch order as one ſhall confirme and explaine the other, and one depend vpon the other.

1. Concluſion.

A man that doth but beginne to bee conuerted, is euen at that inſtant, the very child of God, though inwardly hee bee more carnall then ſpirituall.

The Expoſition.

IN a man there muſt be conſidered three things, the ſubſtance of the body and ſoule, whereof man is ſaid to conſiſt; the faculties placed in the ſoule and exerciſed in the body, as vnderſtanding, will, affections: the in-

tegrity and puritie of the faculties, whereby they are conformable to the will of God, and beare his Image. And ſince the fall of *Adam*, man is not depriued of his ſubſtance or of the powers and faculties of his ſoule, but onely of the third, which is the puritie, or integritie of nature. And therefore the conuerſion of a ſinner, whereof the concluſion ſpeaketh; is not the change of the ſubſtance of man, or of the faculties of the ſoule: but a renewing and reſtoring of that puritie and holineſſe which was loſt by mans fall, with the aboliſhment of that naturall corruption that is in all the powers of the ſoule. This is the worke of God, and of God alone

alone, and that on this manner. First of all, when it pleaseth God to worke a change in any, he doeth it not first in one part, then afterward in another, as hee that repaires a decaied house by peece-meale: but the worke, both for the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment, is in the whole man, and euery part at once, specially in the minde, conscience, will, and affections: as on the contrary, when *Adam* lost the image of God. hee lost it in euery part. Secondly, the conuersion of a sinner is not wrought all at one instant, but in continuance of time: and that by certaine measures and degrees: And a man is then in the first degree of his conuersion when

when the holy Ghoſt by the meanes of the word, inſpires him with ſome ſpirituall motions, & begines to regenerate and renew the inward powers of his ſoule. and hee may in this caſe very fitly be compared to the night in the firſt dawning of the day, in which though the darkeneſſe remaine and be more in quantitie then the light, yet the Sunne hath alreadie caſt ſome beames of light into the ayre, whereupon wee tearme it the breaking of the day. Now then, the very point which I teach, is, that a man at this inſtant, and in this very ſtate, (God as yet hauing but layde certen beginnings of true conuerſion in his heart) is the very child of God, and that not only

onely in the eternall purpoſe of God (as all the elect are) but indeede by actuall adoption: and this is plaine by a manifeſt reaſon: There bee foure ſpeciall workes of grace in euery childe of God: his vnion with Chriſt, his adoption, iuſtification, & conuerſion: and theſe foure are wrought all at one inſtant, ſo as for order of time, neither goes before, nor after other: and yet in regard of order of nature, vnion with Chriſt, Iuſtification, and adoption, goe before the inward conuerſion of a ſinner, it being the fruite and effect of all. Vpon this it followeth neceſſarily, that a ſinner in the very firſt act of his conuerſion, is iuſtified, adopted, and incorporated into

into the myſticall body of Chriſt. In the Parable of the prodigall ſonne, the father with ioy receiues his wicked childe; but when? ſurely when hee ſaw him comming a farre off, and when as yet hee had made no confeſsion or humiliation to his father, but onely had conceiued with himſelfe a purpoſe to returne and to ſay, Father I haue ſinned againſt heauen and againſt thee, &c. And *Paul* ſaith of many of the Corinthians, that hee could not ſpeake vnto them as ſpirituall men, but as carnall, euen babes in Chriſt, 1. *Corin.* 3. 1. When *Dauid* reprooued by *Nathan* did but begin to repent and to ſay, *I haue ſinned*, preſently *Nathan* the Prophet of the Lord

Lord ſaid, *The Lord hath taken away thy ſinne.* Of this thing *Dauid* ſeemes to ſpeake of in the 32. Pſal. v. 5. *I ſaid* (that is, I purpoſed and thought with my ſelfe) *I will confeſſe againſt my ſelfe mine vnrighteouſneſſe, and thou forgaueſt mine iniquities.* Vpon theſe wordes *Auguſtine* ſaith, *Marke, he doeth not confeſſe, but promiſeth to confeſſe, and God forgiueth him.* Againe, *There be* (ſaith hee) *three ſillables*, peccaui, *I haue ſinned? and from theſe three ſillables the flame of a ſacrifice did aſcend into heauen before God.* Chryſoſtome ſaith, *Say thou haſt ſinned: and thou haſt looſed thy ſinne.* And Ambroſe ſaith: *If he ſaid, I will confeſſe, and obtained pardon before hee confeſſed, how much more when*

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he had confeſſed, ſaying, I know mine iniquitie, Was his ſinne pardoned? Gregory on this Pſal. ſaith, *Marke how ſpeedily pardon comes, and how great is the commendation of Gods mercy, in that pardon comes together with the deſire of confeſſion, and remiſſion comes to the heart, before confeſſion breake foorth in ſpeech.*

II. Concluſion.

The firſt materiall beginnings of the conuerſion of a ſinner, or the ſmalleſt meaſure of renewing grace, haue the promiſes of this life, and the life to come.

The Expoſition.

THe beginnings of conuerſion muſt bee diſtinguiſhed: ſome are beginnings of

of preparation, some beginnings of composition. Beginnings of preparation are such as bring vnder, tame and subdue the stubbernnes of mans nature: without making any change at all: of this sort are the accusations of the conscience by the ministerie of the law, feares and terrours arising thence, compunction of heart, which is the apprehension of Gods anger against sinne. Now these and the like, I exclude in the conclusion; for though they goe before to prepare a sinner to his conuersion following, yet are they no graces of God, but fruits both of the law, being the ministery of death, as also of an accusing conscience. Beginnings of composition

ſition I tearme all thoſe inward motions and inclinations of Gods Spirit, that follow after the worke of the law vpon the conſcience, and riſe vpon the meditation of the Goſpell, that promiſeth righteouſneſſe and life euerlaſting by Chriſt: out of which motion the conuerſion of a ſinner ariſeth, and of which it conſiſteth: what theſe are, it ſhall afterward appeare. Againe, grace muſt bee diſtinguiſhed: it is twofold; reſtraining grace, or reneuing grace. Reſtraining grace, I tearme certaine common gifts of God, ſeruing onely to order and frame the outward conuerſation of men to the Law of God, or ſeruing to bereaue men of excuſe in the day of iudge-

iudgement. By this kinde of grace, heathen men haue beene liberall, iuſt, ſober, valiant, and mercifull. By it men liuing in the Church of God, haue beene inlightened, and hauing taſted of the good word of God, haue reioyced therein, and for a time outwardly conformed themſelues thereto. Reneuing grace is not common to all men, but proper to the elect, and it is a gift of Gods Spirit, whereby the corruption of a ſinner is not only reſtrained, but alſo mortified, and the decayed image of God reſtored in righteouſnes and true holines. Now then the concluſion muſt only bee vnderſtood of the ſecond and not of the firſt: for though a man haue neuer ſo much

much of this reſtraining grace, yet vnleſſe he haue the ſpirit of Chriſt to create faith in the heart, and to ſanctifie him, he is as farre from ſaluation as another. Thus then the ſence and meaning of the concluſion is, that the verie leaſt meaſure of ſauing grace and the very beginning or ſeedes of regeneration doe declaire, and after a ſort giue title to men of all the merciſull promiſes of God, whether they concerne this life or the life to come: and are therfore approoued of God, if they bee in truth; & accepted as greater meauſures of grace. That which our Sauiour Chriſt ſaith of the worke of miracles, Math. 17. 20. *If yee haue faith as a graine of Muſterd*

sterd-seede, ye shall say vnto this mountaine, remoone hence to yonder place, and it shall remoone, must by the law of equall proportion bee applyed to saving faith, repentance, the feare of God, and all other graces; if they bee truely wrought in the heart, though they be but as small as one little graine of Musterd-seede, they shall bee sufficiently effectuall to bring foorth good workes, for which they are ordained. The Prophet *Esay* 42. 3. saith, that Christ *shall not quench the smoaking flaxe, nor breake the bruised reede*. Let the comparison bee marked: fire in flaxe must bee both little and weake in quantitie as a spake or twaine, that cannot cause a flame, but only

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ly a ſmoake, ſpecially in a matter ſo eaſie to burne. Here then is ſignified, that the gifts and graces of Gods ſpirit, that are both for meaſure and ſtrength as a ſparke or twaine of fire, ſhall not bee neglected, but rather accepted and cheriſhed by Chriſt. When our Sauiour Chriſt heard the young man make a confeſsion of a practiſe but of outward and ciuill righteouſneſſe, *he looked vpon him and loued him.* Marke 10. 21. and when he heard the Scribe to ſpeake diſcreetely but one good ſpeech, that to loue God with all the heart is aboue all ſacrifices, hee ſaid vnto him, *That he was not farre from the kingdome of Heauen.* Therefore no doubt, hee will loue with a more ſpeciall

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loue, and accept as the good ſubiects of his kingdome, thoſe that haue receiued a further mercy of God, to bee borne anew of water and the Spirit.

III. Concluſion.

A conſtant and earneſt deſire to bee reconciled to God, to beleeue, and to repent, if it bee in a touched heart, is in acceptation with God, as reconciliation, faith, repentance it ſelfe.

The Expoſition.

LVſt or deſire is two-fold, naturall, and ſupernatural. Naturall is that whoſe beginnings and obiect is in nature, that

that is, which ariſeth of the naturall will of man, and affecteth ſuch things as are thought to bee good according to the light of nature. And this kinde of deſire hath his degrees, yet ſo as they are all limited within the compaſſe of nature. Some deſire Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, ſome learning and knowledge, becauſe it is the light and perfection of the minde: ſome goe further and ſeeke after the vertues of iuſtice, temperance, liberalitie, &c. and thus many heathen men haue excelled. Some againe deſire true happineſſe, as *Balaam* did, who wiſhed to die the death of the righteous: becauſe it is the propertie of nature to ſeeke the preſeruation of it ſelfe.

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But here nature staies it selfe for where the minde reueales not, the will affects not Supernaturall desires, are such as both for their beginning and obiect, are aboue nature. For their beginning is from the holy Ghost; and the obiect or matter about which they are conuersant, are things diuine and spirituall which concerne the kingdome of heauen: and of this kinde are the desires of which I speake in this place. Againe, that wee may not bee deceiued in our desires, but may the better discerne them from flittering and fleeting motions, I adde three restraints. First of all the desire of reconciliation, the desire to beleeue, or the desire to repent, &c. must bee con-

conſtant and haue continuance, otherwiſe it may iuſtly be ſuſpected; Secondly, it muſt be earneſt and ſerious, though not alwaies, yet at ſometimes that wee may bee able to ſay, with *Dauid*, My ſoule deſireth after thee O Lord, as the thirſty land: and, As the Hart braieth after the riuers of water, ſo panteth my ſoule after thee O God, my ſoule thirſteth for God, euen the liuing God; Thirdly, It muſt bee in a touched heart; for when a man is touched in conſcience, the heart is caſt downe, and (as much as it can (it withdraws it ſelfe from God. For this cauſe, if then there bee any ſpirituall motions whereby the heart is lift vp vnto God, they are without

out doubt from the Spirit of God. Thus then I anouch, that the desire of reconciliation with God in Christ, is reconciliation it selfe: the desire to beleeue, is faith indeed: & the desire to repent, repentance it selfe. But marke how. A desire to be reconciled, is not reconciliation in nature (for the desire is one thing, and reconciliation is another) but in Gods acceptation: for if wee being touched throughly for our sinnes, doe desire to haue them pardoned, and to be at one with God, God accepts vs as reconciled. Againe, desire to beleeue, it is not faith in nature, but onely in Gods acceptation, God accepting the will for the deede. That this doctrine is the will and

word of God, it appeares by these reasons. First of all, God hath annexed a promise of blessednesse, and of life euerlasting, to the desire of grace, Math. 5. *Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall bee satisfied* Ioh. 7. 38. *If any man thirst, let him come to mee, and drinke.* Reuel. 21. *I will giue vnto him which is a thirst, of the well of the water of life freely.* Now what is this to thirst? properly it is when wee are in a drought or drinesse, and want drinke to refresh vs, and desire it. And therefore by all resemblance, they are said to thirst after righteousnesse, that want it, and would faine haue it. And they thirst after Christ, that feele themselues out of Christ and

and deſire, yea long after the blood of Chriſt, that they might bee refreſhed with it in their conſciences. Here then wee ſee, that the deſire of mercie, in the want of mercie, is the obtaining of mercie; and the deſire to beleeue in the want of faith, is faith. Marke then: though as yet thou want firme and liuely grace, yet art thou not altogether voide of grace, if thou canſt vnfainedly deſire it, thy deſire is the ſeede, conception, or bud of that which thou wanteſt. Now is the ſpring time of the ingrafted word, or the immortall ſeede caſt into the furrowes of thy heart: waite but a while, vſing the good meanes to this end appointed, and thou ſhalt ſee

the leaues blossomes and fruite will shortly follow after. Secondly, the desire of any good thing is accepted of God, as the liuely inuocation of his holy name, Psal. 10. *God heareth the desire of the poore.* Psal. 145. *He will fulfill the desire of them that feare him.* When *Moses* said nothing, but onely desired in heart the helpe and protection of God at the red sea, the Lord said vnto him, Why cryest thou vnto me? *Exod.* 14. 15. And when wee know not to pray as wee ought, *Paul* saith, that the spirit maketh request by the inward groanes of the heart, *Rom.* 8. 26. Hence I gather, that when a man in his weakenesse prayers with sighes and groanes, for the gift of a liue-

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ly faith, the want whereof hee findes in himſelfe, his very paryer on this manner made, is as truely in acceptation with God, as a prayer made in a liuely faith. And here it is further to bee conſidered, that *Paul* calles theſe *groanes vnſpeakeable*, and why? Of moſt interpreters they are thought to bee vnſpeakeable by reaſon of their greatneſſe, and this I will not denie: it ſeemes neuertheleſſe that they are ſo tearmed by reaſon of their weakeneſſe, for they are commonly ſmall, weake, and confuſed in the hearts of Gods children when they are diſtreſſed: and the words following ſeeme to import thus much: for when it had beene ſaid that Gods Spirit in

vs makes requeſt with groanes not to bee vttered: ſome man might haply reply and ſay, If wee cannot diſcerne and vtter theſe groanes in our ſelues, what are wee the better? *Paul* addes therefore, that although we know not, yet God a ſearcher of all things hidden in the heart, knowes the minde and meaning of the ſpirit. And thus the wordes yet further affoard a comfortable inſtruction in the children of God, namely, that being in diſtreſſe, whether in life or death, if by grace wee can but ſigh, or ſob vnto God, though it bee weake and feeble, like the faint pulſe in the time of death; wee, or the Spirit of God in vs, doe indeede make requeſt vnto God that ſhall be heard,

heard; yea, (as the words are) wee doe more then make request: and though we doe not alwaies see what Gods Spirit makes vs to sigh after, yet God doth. To the testimony of Scripture, I adde the testimonies of godly and learned men, not to prooue the doctrine in hand; but to shew a consent, and to prooue thus much, that the thing which I auouch is no priuate phantasie of any man. *Easily* (saith Ambrose of God) *is hee reconciled, (b) if he be instantly intreated.* Augustine saith, *Let thy desire bee before him, and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly: for thy desire is thy prayer, and if thy desire bee continuall, thy prayer is continuall.* Hee addes further in

Lib. 7. in Lu. c. 66

b Si impenserotur.

On Ps. 36

the ſame place, that *the deſire is a continuall voice, and the crie of the heart, and the inward invocation of God, which may bee made without intermiſſion.* Againe, *To deſire the helpe of grace is the beginning of grace.* Againe: (a) *The whole life of a good Chriſtian, is an holy will and deſire. And that which thou deſireſt, thou ſeeſt not: but by deſiring, art (as it were) inlarged and made capable, that when it ſhall come which thou ſhalt ſee, thou maiſt bee filled.* Baſill ſaith, *Onely thou muſt will, and God will come of his owne accord.* (b) Bernard ſaith; *What, is not deſire a voice? Yea a verie ſtrong voice. God heareth the deſire of the poore; and a continuall deſire, though wee ſpeake nothing, is a voice continued*

a Expo. Epiſt. Ioh tract. 4. cap. 3.

Hom. of humilitie

b Sub. cant Ser. 48.

a Lu-

(a) Luther saith, *Christ is then truly Omnipotent, and then truely raignes in vs, when wee are so weake, that wee can scarce giue any grone.* For *Paul* saith, that one such groane is a strong crie in the eares of God, filling both heauen and earth

(a) Tom. 4. pag. 124

* Againe, *Very few know, how weake and small faith and hope is, vnder the crosse, and in temptation. For it appeares, then to bee as smoaking flaxe, which a good blast of winde would persently put out: but such as beleeue in these combates and terrours, against hope, vnder hope, that is, opposing themselues by faith in the promise of Christ, againe the feeling of sinne, and the wrath of God, doe finde after ward that this little sparke of faith (as it appeares to reason*

* Ibid. fol. 156.

which

which hardly perceiueth it) is peradnenture as the whole element of fire which filled all heauen, and swalloweth vp all terrours and sinnes. * Againe, *The more wee finde our vnworthinesse, and the lesse wee finde the promise to belong vnto vs, the more must wee desire them, beeing assured that this desire doth greatly please God, who desireth and willeth that his grace should bee earnestly desired. This doth faith, which iudgeth it a precious thing, and therefore greatly hungreth and thirsteth after it, and so obtaines it. For God is delighted to fill the hungrie with good things, and to send the rich emptie away.* (a) Theodore Beza saith, *If thou finde not thine heart inwardly touched, pray that it may bee*

Ib. fol. 300.

a Resp. ad Acta Colloq Monpel.

be touched: for thou then muſt know that this deſire is a pledge of the fathers will to thee. Kemnitius ſaith: *When I haue a good deſire, though it doe ſcarcely ſhew it ſelfe in ſome little and ſlender ſigh, I muſt bee aſſured that the ſpirit of God is preſent: and worketh his good worke.* Viſinus ſaith, *Faith in the moſt holy men in this life, is imperfect and weake. Yet neuertheleſſe, whoſoeuer feeles in his heart an earneſt deſire, and a ſtriuing againſt his naturall doubtings, both can, and muſt aſſure himſelfe that hee is endued with true faith.* Againe, *Wicked men doe not deſire the grace of the holy Spirit, whereby they may reſiſt ſinne. And therefore they are iuſtly depriued of it: for he that earneſtly deſireth the holy Ghoſt, hath*

Locor. compor. 1

Catechiſ.

hath it already: because this desire of the spirit cannot be but from the spirit: as it is said, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall bee satisfied.*

Epistle to Careless

Bradford said. *Thy sinnes are vndoubtedly pardoned, &c. for God hath giuen thee a penitent and beleeuing heart: that is, an heart which desireth to repent and beleeue: for such an one is taken of him (he accepting the will for the deede) for a penitent and beleeuing heart in deede.*

Booke of the marks of Gods children.

Taffine saith, *Our faith may bee so small and weake, as it doeth not yet bring foorth fruites that may be liuely felt of vs, but if they which feele themselues in such estate, desire to haue these feelings (namely of Gods fauour and loue (if they aske*

aske them at Gods hands by prayer: this deſire and prayer are teſtimonies that the Spirit of God is in them, and that they haue faith already: for, is ſuch a deſire a fruit of the fleſh or of the ſpirit? It is of the holy Spirit, who bringeth it foorth onely in ſuch as hee dwels in, &c. Then theſe holy deſires and prayers being the motions of the holy Ghoſt in vs, are teſtimonies of our faith, although they ſeeme to vs ſmall and weake. As the woman that feeleth the moouing of a childe in her bodie, though very weake, aſſureth her ſelfe that ſhee hath conceiued, and that ſhee goeth with a liue childe. So, if we haue theſe motions, theſe holy affections and deſires before mentioned, let vs not doubt, but that we haue the holy Ghoſt) who is

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the authour of them) dwelling in vs, and consequently that wee haue also faith. Againe, hee saith: first, *If thou hast begunne to hate and flie sinne. 2. If thou feelest that thou art displeased at thy infirmities and corruptions: 3. If hauing offended God thou feelest a griefe, and a sorrow for it: 4. If thou desire to abstaine: 5. If thou auoidest the occasions: 6. If thou trauellest to doe thy endeauour: 7. If thou prayest to God to giue thee grace: All these holy affections proceeding from none other then from the spirit of God ought to bee so many pledges and testimonies, that hee is in thee.*

Psal. 6. Master Knoxe saith, *Albeit your paines sometimes be so horrible, that you finde no release nor comfort, neither in spi-*

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rit nor body, yet if thy heart can only ſob vnto God, deſpaire not, you ſhall obtaine your hearts deſire. And diſtitute you are not of faith: for at ſuch a time as the fleſh, naturall reaſon, the law of God, the preſent torment, the diuell at once doe crie, God is angry, and therefore, there is neither helpe nor remedie to bee hoped for at his hands: at ſuch time I ſay, to ſobbe to God: *is the demonſtration of the ſecret ſeed of God, which is hidden in Gods elect Children: and that* onely ſobbe, *is vnto God a more acceptable ſacrifice, then without this croſſe, to giue our bodies to bee burnt, euen for the Truthes ſake.* More teſtimonies might bee alleadged, but theſe ſhall ſuffice.

Againſt this point of Do-

ctrine

ctrine, it may be alledged, that if desire to beleeue in our weakeneſſe be faith indeede; then ſome are iuſtified, and may bee ſaued wanting a liuely apprehenſion and full perfection of Gods mercie in Chriſt. *Anſ.* Iuſtifying faith in regard of his nature, is alwayes one and the ſame, and the eſſentiall property thereof, is, to apprehend Chriſt with his benefits, and to aſſure the very conſcience thereof. And therefore without ſome apprehenſion & aſſurance there can bee no iuſtification or ſaluation in them that for age are able to beleeue. Yet there bee certaine degrees and meaſures of true faith. There is a ſtrong faith, which cauſeth a full apprehenſion

henſion and perſwaſion of Gods mercy in Chriſt. This meaſure of faith the Lord vouchſafed *Abraham*, *Dauid*, *Pauli*, the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Martyrs of God. It were a bleſſed thing if all beleeuers might attaine vnto this height of liuely faith, to ſay with *Paul*, I am perſwaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing elſe ſhall bee able to ſeparate vs from the loue of God in Chriſt: but all cannot, therefore there is another degree of faith lower then the former, and yet true faith, called a little or weake faith, and it alſo hath a power to apprehend and apply the promiſe of ſaluation, but as yet by reaſon of weaknes, it is infolded (as it were) and

and wrapt vp in the heart, as the leafe and bloſſome in the bud. For ſuch perſons as haue this weake faith, can ſay indeed, that they beleeue their ſinnes to bee pardoned, and that ſeriouſly in their hearts they deſire to haue them pardoned: but as yet they cannot ſay, that they are without all doubt pardoned. And yet the mercy of God is not wanting vnto them. For in that they doe, and can deſire, and endeauour to apprehend, they doe indeede apprehend, God accepting the deſire to doe the thing for the thing done. This which I ſay will the better appeare, if the grounds thereof bee conſidered. Faith doth not iuſtifie in reſpect of it ſelfe, becauſe it is an action

on or vertue : or becauſe it is ſtrong, liuely, and perfect : but in reſpect of the obiect thereof, namely Chriſt crucified, whom faith apprehendeth, as hee is ſet foorth vnto vs in the word and Sacraments. It is Chriſt that is the authour and matter of our Iuſtice, and it is hee that applieth the ſame vnto vs : as for faith in vs, it is but an inſtrument to apprehend and receiue that which Chriſt for his part offereth and giueth. Therefore, if Faith erre not in his proper obiect, but follow the promiſe of God, though it doe but weakely apprehend, or at the leaſt cauſe a man onely to indeauour and deſire to apprehend, it is true faith and iuſtifieth. Though our apprehenſion

prehenſion bee neceſſary, yet our ſaluation ſtands rather in this, that God apprehends vs for his owne, then that wee apprehend him for ours. *Phil.* 3. verſe 12. And rather in this, that we are knowne of him, then that wee know him. Gal. 4. 9.

Out of this concluſion ſprings another not to be omitted, that God acceptes the indeauour of the whole man to obey, for perfect obedience it ſelfe.

THat is, if men endeauour to pleaſe God in all things, God will not iudge their doing by the rigour of his law: but will accept their little and weake endeauour, to doe that which they can doe by his grace, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But here

here remember, I put this Caueat; that this endeauour muſt bee in and by the whole man, the very minde, conſcience, will, and affections, doing that which they can in their kindes: and thus the endeauour to obey, which is a fruite of the ſpirit, ſhall bee diſtinguiſhed from ciuill righteouſneſſe, which may bee in Heathen men, and is onely in the outward, and not in the inward man. The trueth of the concluſion appeares by that which the Prophet *Malachie* ſaith, that God will ſpare them that feare him, as a Father ſpares his childe: who accepts the thing done, as well done, if the childe ſhew his good will to pleaſe his Father, and to doe what he can. Mal. 3. 17

IIII.

IIII. Concluſion.

To ſee and feele in our ſelues the want of any grace pertaining to Saluation, and to be grieued therefore : is the grace it ſelfe.

The Expoſition.

VNderſtand this concluſion as the former, namely that griefe of the heart for the want of any grace neceſſarie to ſaluation, is as much with God as the grace it ſelfe.

When being in diſtreſſe, we cannot pray as wee ought; God accepts the very groans, ſobbes, and ſighes of the perplexed heart, as the prayer it ſelfe, *Rom.* 8. 26. When wee are grieued becauſe we cannot be grieued for our ſinnes, it is a degree and meaſure of godly

ly ſorrow before God. Auguſtine ſaith well: *Sometimes our prayer is luke-warme, or rather cold and almoſt no prayer: nay ſometime it is altogether no prayer at all, and yet wee can with griefe perceiue this in our ſelues: for if wee can but grieue becauſe wee cannot pray, wee now pray indeede.* Com 4. l. 1. ad Simplici. in fine. Hierome ſaith, *Then wee are iuſt when wee doe acknowledge our ſelues to bee ſinners:* Againe, *This is the true wiſedome of man, to know himſelfe to bee imperfect. And (that I may ſo ſpeake) the perfection of all iuſt men in the fleſh is imperfect:* Auguſtine againe ſaith, *That the vertue which is now in a iuſt man: is thus farre forth perfect, that vnto the perfection thereof, there belongs a true acknowledgement, and an humble* Lib. 1. contra Pelagianos.

ble confession of the imperfection thereof. A broken and contrite heart after an offence, is as much with GOD, as if there had beene no offence at all. And therefore so soone as *Dauid* after his grieuious fall, in heauinesse of heart, confessed his sinne, saying in effect but thus much, *I haue sinned*, the Lord pronounceth the pardon of his sinne in heauen, and that presently.

V. Conclusion.

He that hath begunne to subiect himselfe to Christ and his word, though as yet hee bee ignorant in most points of religion, yet if hee haue care to increase in knowledge, and to pra-

practise that which hee knoweth hee is accepted of God, as a true beleeuer.

The Exposition.

SVndrie persons by the Euangelists, are said to beleeue, which had onely seene the miracles of Christ, and as yet had made no further proceedings but to acknowledge Christ to bee the Messias, and to submit themselues to him and his doctrine, which afterward should bee taught. On this manner, the woman of Samaria beleeued, and many of the Samaritans vpon her report: and a certaine ruler, by reason of a miracle wrought vpon his sonne, is said to beleeue, and all his household. *Iohn* 4. 42. 52. When our Sa-

uiour Christ commended the faith of the Apostles, terming it a rocke, against which the gates of hell should not preuaile, it was not the plentifull knowledge of the doctrine of saluation: for they were ignorant of many articles of faith, as namely of the death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdome of Christ: but because they beleeued him to bee the sonne of God, and the Sauiour of mankinde, and they had withall resolued themselues to cleaue vnto him, and the blessed doctrine of saluation, which hee taught, though as yet they were ignorant in many points. The holy Ghost commended the faith of *Rahab*, when shee receiued the spies: Now this her faith was

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indeed but a ſeede and beginning of liuely faith: for then ſhee had onely heard of the miracles done in Egypt, and of the deliuerance of the Iſraelites, and was thereupon ſmitten with feare, and had conceiued a reſolution with her ſelfe, to ioyne her ſelfe to the Iſraelites, and to worſhip the true God. Now theſe and the like, are tearmed beleeuers, vpon iuſt cauſe: for though they bee ignorant as yet, yet their ignorance ſhall bee no continuing or laſting ignorance: and they haue excellent ſeedes of grace, namely, a purpoſe of heart to cleaue to Chriſt, and a care to profit in the doctrine of ſaluation, whereof they haue ſome little knowledge.

VI. Conclusion.

The foresaide beginnings of grace are counterfeit, vnlesse they increase.

The Exposition.

THe wickednesse of mans nature, and the depth of hypocrisie is such, that a man may and can easily transforme himselfe into the counterfeit and resemblance of any grace of GOD. Therefore I put downe in this last conclusion a certaine note, whereby the gifts of God may bee discerned, namely, that they grow vp and increase, as the graine of Musterd-seede, to a great tree, and beare fruit answerably. The grace in the heart is like

like the graine of Musterd-seede in two things. First, it is small to see to, at the beginning: Secondly, after it is cast into the ground of the heart, it increaseth speedily, and spreades it selfe. Therefore, if a man at the first haue but some little feeling of his wants, some weake and faint desire, some small obedience, hee must not let this sparke of grace goe out, but these motions of the spirit must bee increased by the vse of the word, Sacraments, and prayer: and they must daily bee stirred vp by meditating, endeauouring, striuing, asking, seeking, knocking. The Master deliuering his Talents to his seruants, saith vnto them; Occupie till I come, and not

hide in the earth, *Matth.* 25. 16. *Paul* vſeth an excellent ſpeech to *Timothie*: I exhort thee to ſtirre vp the gift of God which is in thee: namely, as fire is ſtirred vp by often blowing, and putting to of wood: 2. *Timoth.* 1. 6. As for ſuch motions of the heart that laſt for a weeke, or a moneth, and after vaniſh away, they are not to bee regarded: and the Lord by the Prophet *Oſea* complaineth of them, ſaying, *O Ephraim; thy righteouſneſſe is like the morning dew.* Chap. 6.

Therefore conſidering, that grace, vnleſſe it bee confirmed and exerciſed, is indeede no grace; I will here adde certaine rules of direction, that wee may the more eaſily put in

in practiſe the ſpirituall exercíſe of inuocation, faith, and repentance: and thereby alſo quicken and reuiue the ſeedes and beginnings of grace.

1 In what place ſo euer thou art, whether alone or abroad, by day or by night, and whatſoeuer thou art doing, ſet thy ſelfe in the preſence of God, let this perſwaſion alwayes take place in thy heart, that thou art before the liuing God: and do thy endeuor, that this perſwaſion may ſmite thy heart with awe and reuerence, and make thee afraide to ſinne. This counſell the Lord gaue *Abraham* Gen. 17. 1. *Walke before me, and be vpright.* This thing alſo was practiſed by *Enoch*, who for this cauſe is ſaid *to walke with God*,

2 Esteeme of euery present day, as of the day of thy death; and therefore liue as though thou were dying, and doe those good duties euery day that thou wouldest doe, if thou were dying. This is Christian watchfulnesse, and remember it.

3. Make Catalogues and billes of thine owne sinnes, especially of those sinnes that haue most dishonored God, and wounded thine owne conscience: set them before thee often, especially then, when thou hast any particular occasion of reneuing thy repentance, that thy heart by this dolefull sight may bee further humbled. This was *Dauids* practise, when hee considered his wayes, and turned

turned his feete to Gods commandements. Psalme 119.57. And when hee confessed the sinnes of his youth. Psal. 25. This was *Iobs* practise, when hee said he was not able to answere one of a thousand of his sinnes vnto God. *Iob* 9.1.

4 When thou first openest thine eyes in a morning, pray to God, and giue him thankes heartily: God then shall haue his honour: and thy heart shall bee the better for it the whole day following.

For wee see in experience, that vessels keepe long the tast of that liquor wherewith they are first seasoned. And when thou liest downe, let that be the last also: for thou knowest not, whether thou being fallen asleepe, shalt euer rise againe

againe aliue. Good therefore it is, that thou ſhouldeſt giue vp thy ſelfe into the hands of God whilſt thou art waking.

5 Labour to ſee and feele thy ſpirituall pouerty, that is, to ſee the want of grace in thy ſelfe, eſpecially thoſe inward corruptions, of vnbeleefe, pride, ſelfe-loue, &c. Labour to be diſpleaſed with thy ſelfe: and labour to feele, that by reaſon of them thou ſtandeſt in neede of euery drop of the blood of Chriſt to heale and clenſe thee from theſe wants: and let this practiſe take ſuch place with thee, that if thou bee demanded what in thine eſtimation is the vileſt of the creatures vpon earth? thine heart and conſcience may anſwere with a loud voyce, *I*,

euen I, by reason of mine owne sinnes: and againe, if thou bee demanded what is the best thing in the world for thee, thy heart and conscience may answere againe with a strong and loud crie, *One droppe of the blood of Christ to wash away my sinnes.*

6 Shew thy selfe to bee a member of Christ, and a seruant of God, not onely in the generall calling of a Christian, but also in the particular calling, in which thou art placed. It is nothing for a magistrate to bee a Christian man, but hee must also bee a Christian magistrate: it is not enough for a master of a family to bee a Christian man or a Christian in the Church, but hee must also bee a Christian in his family and

and in the trade which hee followeth daily. Not euery one that is a common hearer of the word, and a frequenter of the Lords table, is therefore a good Christian, vnlesse his conuersation in his priuate house, and in his priuate affaire and dealings be sutable; There, is a man to bee seene what he is.

7 Search the Scriptures, to see what is sinne, and what is not sinne, in euery action: this done, carry in thy heart a constant and resolute purpose, not to sinne in any thing: for Faith and the purpose of sinning can neuer stand together.

8 Let thine endeauour bee sutable to thy purpose: and therefore doe nothing at any time

time againſt thy conſcience, rightly enformed by the word: exerciſe thy ſelfe to eſchew euery ſinne, and to obey God in euery one of his commandements, that pertaine either to the generall calling of a Chriſtian, or thy particular calling. Thus did good *Ioſias* who turned vnto God with all his heart, according to *all* the lawe of *Moſes*, 1. King. 23. 25. and thus did *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that walked *in all* the commandements of God without reproofe. *Luk.* 1. 6.

9 If at any time againſt thy purpoſe and reſolution, thou bee ouertaken with any ſinne little or great, lye not in it, but ſpeedily recoure thy ſelfe by repentance: humble thy

thy ſelfe, confeſsing thine offence, and by prayer intreate the Lord to pardon the ſame, and that earneſtly, till ſuch time as thou findeſt thy conſcience truely pacified, and thy care to eſchew the ſame ſinne increaſed.

10 Conſider often of the right and proper end of thy life in this world, which is not to ſeeke profite, honour, pleaſure, but that in ſeruing of men, wee might ſerue God in our callings. God could, if it ſo pleaſed him, preſerue man without the miniſtry of man, but his pleaſure is to fulfill his worke and will in the preſeruation of our bodies, and ſaluation of our ſoules, by the imploiment of men in his ſeruice, euery one according to his

his vocation. Neither is there so much as a bond-slaue, but hee must in and by his faithfull seruice to his Master, serue the Lord. Men therefore doe commonly profane their labours and liues, by ayming at a wrong end, when all their care consisteth onely in getting sufficient maintenance for them and theirs, for the obtaining of credite, riches, and carnall commodities. For thus men serue themselues, and not God, or men: much lesse doe they serue God in seruing of men.

11 Giue all diligence to make thy election sure, and to gether manifold tokens thereof. For this cause obserue the workes of Gods prouidence, loue, and mercy, both

both in thee and vpon thee, from time to time: for the ſerious conſideration of them, and the laying of them together, when they are many and ſeuerall, miniſter much direction, aſſurance of Gods fauour and comfort. This was the practiſe of Dauid, 1. *Sam.* 17.34. *Pſal.* 25. all.

12 Thinke euermore thy preſent eſtate whatſoeuer it bee, to bee the beſt eſtate for thee: becauſe whatſoeuer befalles thee, though it be ſickenes, or any other affliction, or death, befals thee of the good prouidence of God. That this may the better bee done, labour to ſee and acknowledge the prouidence of God, as well in pouertie as in abundance; as well in diſgrace as in good

good report, as well in ſickneſſe as in health, as well in life as in death.

13 Pray continually; I meane, not by ſolemne and ſet prayer, but by ſecret and inward elaculations of the heart, that is, by a continuall eleuation of thy minde vnto Chriſt, ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, and that either by prayer or giuing of thankes ſo often as any occaſion ſhall be offered.

14 Thinke often of the worſt and moſt grieuous things that may befall thee, either in this life or death for the name of Chriſt: make a reckoning of them, and prepare thy ſelfe to beare them: that when they come, they may not ſeeme ſtrange, but be borne

borne the more easily.

15 Make conscience of idle, vaine, vnhonest, and vngodly thoughts: for these are the seedes and beginnings of actuall sinne in word and in deede. This want of care in ordering and composing of our thoughts, is often punished with a fearefull temptation in the very thought, called of Diuines, *Tentatio blasphemiarum*, a tentation of blasphemies.

16 When any good motion or affection riseth in the heart, suffer it not to passe away, but feede it by reading, meditating praying.

17 Whatsoeuer good thing thou goest about, whether it bee in word or deede, doe it not in conceit of thy selfe,

or

or in the pride of thy heart, but in humility aſcribing the power whereby thou doeſt thy worke, and the praiſe thereof to God : otherwiſe thou ſhalt finde by experience God will curſe thy beſt doings.

18 Deſpiſe not ciuill honeſty : good conſcience and good manners muſt goe together : therefore remember to make conſcience of lying, and of cuſtomable ſwearing, in common talke : contend not either in deede or word with any man, bee curteous and gentle to all, good and bad : beare with mens wants and frailties, as haſtineſſe, frowardneſſe, ſelfe-liking, curiouſneſſe, &c. paſsing by them as being not perceiued :

ued: returne not euill for euill, but rather good for euill: vse meate, drinke, and apparell, in that manner and measure, that they may further godlinesse; and may bee as it were signes, in which thou mayest expresse the hidden grace of thy heart: Striue not to goe beyond any, vnlesse it bee in good things: goe before thine equals in giuing of honour, rather then in taking of it: make conscience of thy word, and let it bee as a bond: professe no more outwardly then thou hast inwardly in heart: oppresse or defraude no man in bargaining: in all companies, eitheir doe good, or take good.

19 Cleaue not by inordinate affection to any creature,

ture, but aboue all things quiet & rest thy minde in Christ, aboue all dignitie and honour, aboue all cunning and policy, aboue all glorie and honour, aboue all health and beautie, aboue all wealth and treasure, aboue all ioy and delight, aboue all fame and praise, aboue all mirth and consolation, that a mans heart can feele or deuise beside Christ.

With these rules of practise, ioyne rules of meditation; whereby I propound fixe vnto thee, as I finde them set downe by a learned Diuine called *Victorinus Strigelius*.

I.

Wee must not fall away from God for any creature.

II.

Infinite eternity is farre to be

bee preferred before the ſhort race of this mortall life.

III.

Wee muſt hold faſt the promiſe of grace, though wee loſe all temporall bleſsings; and they alſo in death muſt needes be left.

IIII.

Let the loue of God in Chriſt, and the loue of the Church for Chriſt, bee ſtrong in thee, and preuaile againſt all other affections.

V.

It is the principall part of a Chriſtian, to beleeue things inuiſible, to hope for things deferred, to loue God when hee ſhewes him to bee an enemie, and thus to preſeuere vnto the end.

VI.

VI.

It is a most effectuall remedy for any griefe, to quiet our selues in a confidence of the presence and helpe of God: and to aske him, and withall to waite, either for some easement or deliuerance.

VII.

All the workes of God are done in contrarie meanes.

FINIS.